



NEWS RELEASE

UNITED STATES SPECIAL OPERATIONS COMMAND

*Public Affairs Office
(813) 828-4600*

7701 Tampa Point Blvd.

*MacDill AFB, FL 33621-5323
Fax: (813) 828-4035*

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Joint Special Operations University introduces ‘Enlightened Warrior’

Deployed SOF, family members to earn degrees online

MACDILL AFB, FL -- The U.S. Special Operations Command partnered today with four universities in what’s known as the Enlightened Warrior Program, a new curriculum to offer members an optimal chance to earn accelerated college degrees, during a signing ceremony here. The program is designed to minimize challenges for often-deployed USSOCOM members and their families and provide benefits such as earning degrees entirely online, classes that are self-paced even while deployed, and offering extensive college credit for training and experience.

“It’s an especially difficult time for military members to attend a brick and mortar university,” said Vice Adm. Eric Olson, the USSOCOM Deputy Commander, who hosted the leaders from the four universities in formalizing the new partnership, noting that USSOCOM members are fully engaged in the Global War on Terrorism. “We want our people to grow in every way while serving in special operations forces. Enlightened Warrior gives them all a much greater opportunity to earn a college degree.”

USSOCOM Commander Gen. Doug Brown and Senior Enlisted Adviser Command Chief Master Sgt. Bob Martens ordered research and development of the EWP as a retention initiative for Special Operations Forces personnel. The initiative allows education to work for the deployed SOF operator and the ones at home taking care of loved ones.

“Even deployed, our people get a chance to work on degrees and not put education on hold,” said Chief Master Sgt. Arnold E. Lamb, the Senior Enlisted Adviser for the Joint Special Operations University. “Being deployed a lot means that it’s harder for our people to go to school. Meanwhile, a spouse can also be home with the family working on his or her degree at a reduced cost.”

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Through EWP, the special operators and their family members are tagged as “SOF students,” receive additional student services and lower tuition costs compared to mainstream students. Some of the universities offer up to 15 percent discount for tuition for military and family member students.

“The idea is that SOF personnel can go from beginning to end in earning a degree with the same team,” said Dr. Joe Stuart, dean for the JSOU. While he and his JSOU team looked at more than 300 university programs, Stuart and his team settled on four universities which offer advanced degrees, online courses, and self-paced courses tailored to the needs of SOF. The program is open to all members of USSOCOM around the world.

Administered online through the JSOU at Hurlburt Field, Fla., the program will offer educational opportunities to all USSOCOM enlisted members, officers, warrant officers and family members. American InterContinental University, Capella University, Jones International University, and Western Governors University partnered with USSOCOM to award college credit to SOF personnel commensurate with training and experience, thus reducing the length of time required for a traditional degree program.

“We narrowed it down to four schools because each of these has unique offerings for our command,” Stuart said. “Each of the schools is military and family friendly. While the service member is earning a degree, a family member can be working on a degree as well and eventually save thousands of dollars over the life of the program.”

All four universities are regionally accredited and accept tuition assistance, VA and other financial aid programs. The program offers 100-percent online coursework, thus allowing for “anytime, anyplace” accessibility, as well as discounts for service members and their immediate family members.

Prospective students should start the EWP by visiting the JSOU website. On line registration is available at <https://www.hurlburt.af.mil/jsou/>.